Where the Litani River Flows: Coastal Survey in El-Kharayeb, Southern Lebanon – Wissam Khalil – 2017

The project entitled "Where the Litani River Flows: Coastal survey in El-Kharayeb, Southern Lebanon," started on the 25th of September and ended on the 30th of November 2017. It is a joint Lebanese and Italian multidisciplinary mission directed by both Ida Oggiano from the Institute for Ancient Mediterranean Studies - Italian National Research Council (Roma) and Wissam Khalil from the Department of Arts and Archaeology - Lebanese University. The project is financed by the Honor Frost Foundation, and implemented in close collaboration with the Directorate General of Antiquities, with the support of the Municipality of Kharayeb, and the Department of Arts and Archaeology at the Lebanese University (Sidon).

The project is divided into three main phases:

- Phase 1: Preliminary desk-based assessment - This phase began at the end of September in parallel to the fieldwork until the 30th of November 2017. It focused on collecting data and documents on the Kharayeb and Adloun area.
- Phase 2: The Survey - The intense archaeological surveys from the 25th of September till the 31st of October 2017.
- Phase 3: Dissemination, the team mission will present the results of the mission in two separate reports, the first one is a general presentation of the works, and the second one is a preliminary report. Both will be sent to the HFF and to the DGA. The mission will also present the results of the 2017 works at the department in Sidon during the second semester of 2018, and at the municipality of Kharayeb (date to be fixed in coordination with the HFF and the Mayor of Kharayeb).

The Terrestrial Survey

The survey area stretches from the Litani River in Kharayeb along the coast till the modern port of Adloun (under construction) in the north. To the east, it covered the agricultural plain stretching from the shores and stopped at the edge of the coastal road.



It aimed to study the coastal area using an interdisciplinary approach mixing geography, geomorphology, history and archaeology, environmental, social, and ethnography.

The survey of the near shore covered systematically all sites and features. As for the plains of Kharayeb and Adloun, the archaeologists surveying the zone couldn't cover all the area because the majority of the land was fenced or cultivated by plants and trees that made the survey of more than 50 percent of this territory impossible.

In Adloun: Six archaeological sites were located along the coastline of Adloun stretching from the Abou el-Aswad water stream mouth (south) till the modern port (north). Twenty-four archaeological features all related to ports, quarrying, industrial and funeral activities were also discovered. These archaeological sites and features date from the Hellenistic until the medieval period. They are all the result of intense human activity of two major agglomerations: Adloun and the Minet Abou Zei Tell.



In Kharayeb: Five archaeological sites were located along the coast and hinterland of Kharayeb. The most important one is a small archaeological tell from the 5th and 4th centuries BC located on the mouth of the Litani River. A Roman bridge of fine stone on the Abou el-Aswad stream and a fragment of a Latin inscription also are among the important discoveries in Kharayeb. Thirty-three archaeological features were identified in the Khirbet el-Qanater site the majority of which are not in situ and were brought from other sites.

The underwater visual survey

The underwater visual survey and the boat survey, from the shore of El-Kharayeb to Adloun port, complements the terrestrial and the partial coastal survey which extends for 8 km in length.

The main objectives for the 2017 season were to identify the areas with underwater archaeological potential, to identify harbour installations and anchorage sites, and situate and record any submerged reef to locate potential shipwrecks sites.

The main survey method was free diving and snorkelling. The team consisted of two divers. Two main visual survey methods were used: the parallel ground lines and the circular search.

During the survey, the divers localized and photographed the archaeological material present. The GPS was used to mark the position of the archaeological materials.

Several areas were surveyed, on two zones presented some features and were located:

- In kharayeb, facing the two sandy bays where there is the presence of different fragments of pottery on mixed seabed, sandy stretches and rocky. The concentration of pottery material in the south of the second bay may indicate that some shipping activity probably had taken place.
- In Adloun, in front of the artificial mound Site AD002 – Ras Minet Bou Zei. Sandy and rocky seabed, depth 4 m at 100 m from the coast. In the part closest to the beach, it can be seen on the sand, at the shallow depth of 1 m, fragments of fluted pottery that are poured into the sea due to the erosion of the hill. The survey is carried out in the area up to 100 meters from the beach. Presence of a stone artefact, perhaps a fragment of anchor, at 30 m from the coast.

